



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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news digest

95030D

Church shaken by evidence of alleged misuse of funds by former national treasurer

(ENS) The Episcopal Church--still reeling from the suicide of the bishop of Massachusetts and facing a new campaign by conservative bishops against those who have ordained noncelibate homosexuals--was further shaken by revelations that the church's former treasurer may have engaged in misuse of funds.

In a sobering presentation to a retreat of the Executive Council in Providence, Rhode Island, February 13, Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and his chancellor or legal advisor, David Beers, said that they had evidence that appears to "indicate misuse of church funds" by Ellen Cooke, who resigned January 6 as treasurer.

Browning said that, when several irregularities were brought to his attention, he "immediately retained legal counsel to assist me in an investigation into these and other possible financial improprieties." That initial investigation "disclosed sufficient grounds for concern" and led to a meeting with Cooke and her husband Nicholas in Virginia where he had recently assumed the call to St. John's Church in McLean. Evidence of the potential financial impropriety was discovered only after her resignation, Browning said, while she was serving as a consultant "to assist in the winding up of the financial affairs of the last triennium."

Meeting in small groups during their two-day retreat, council members expressed shock and anger--but also a deep concern and determination that the situation not affect the wider mission of the church. "We are trying to communicate to our people that those of us who are fiscally responsible are taking the necessary steps to get to the bottom" of the alleged financial misuse, said Bishop Don Wimberly of Lexington, Kentucky, who is the chair of the council's administration and finance committee. "We don't want this to damage the mission of the church," he said, adding that the committee would take a close look to make sure that sufficient safeguards are in place.

95031D

Donald Burchell elected new treasurer for Episcopal Church

(ENS) Donald P. Burchell, appointed acting treasurer of the Episcopal Church following the resignation of treasurer Ellen Cooke, was elected treasurer officially February 16 by the Executive Council meeting in Providence, Rhode Island.

Burchell, who came to the church center as assistant treasurer in May, 1994, also was appointed treasurer of the Episcopal Church's General Convention, a position Cooke held as well, by Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and Pamela Chinnis, president of the General Convention's House of Deputies.

After Cooke's resignation January 6, evidence was discovered indicating she may have been involved in misuse of church funds.

Council member Joyce Austin of New York called Burchell "the right person at the right place at the right time," and said "his skill at interpersonal relations is exceptional." Browning underscored the faith he holds in Burchell's integrity, and Bishop Donald Wimberly, chair of the council's administration and finance committee, praised Burchell's style of interaction with the committee.

"We appreciate his openness and his wanting to be collaborative in the work of the committee," Wimberly said. The committee gave Burchell a unanimous endorsement.

95032D

Executive Council calls communication key to church's healing

(ENS) The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church affirmed the priority of communication--both of good news and bad--in a meeting dominated by the report of possible misuse of funds by the church's former treasurer.

Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, February 13-17, council members struggled with their own reactions to the difficult news that Ellen Cooke, who resigned as treasurer January 6, may have misused church funds.

Having shared the "common pain, common tragedy" through the meeting, the members may well have become "more of a council" as a result, observed Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning. And several members

expressed their hopes that the event, rather than impede the church's mission, might in a similar way draw the church together. The key to that, they said, was as complete disclosure of the facts of the case as possible.

To strengthen other lines of communication, the council endorsed a second round of visits by council members to dioceses to listen and encourage shared ministry. They also authorized shareholder action supporting a number of social issues, and heard reports of ongoing ecumenical links with the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches.

95033D

Rwandans rebuild their lives in midst of demands for justice

(ENS) While some Rwandans try to piece together their lives after the war and genocide that shattered their country, others say there can be no peace and reconciliation before those responsible for the violence are brought to justice. Outward signs suggest that the new government of Rwanda, comprised of Tutsis and moderate Hutus, has been successful in its effort to rebuild the country after the genocide and war that took over a million lives last year. But across the Rwandan borders in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, muddy refugee camps controlled by the leaders of the militias that were responsible for the genocide in 1994 are crowded with over a million Hutus.

"The leaders of the camps, unwittingly aided and abetted by the UN and the international humanitarian agencies, hope that if they stall long enough, they will not have to pay for their actions. They also want to rebuild their army and militias to invade our country or destabilize it further," said Christine Umutoni, deputy minister of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the government which is dominated by the Rwanda Patriotic Front, a Tutsi-led group that defeated the Hutu army in July 1994.

She said that the goal of reconciliation between the factions in the country and in the refugee camps could only be reached by bringing those guilty of the genocide to justice. And she declared that this could only be achieved with international assistance. "Genocide is the whole world's problem," she said. "We could do this justice ourselves, but we think the world, which has a convention against genocide requiring governments to act against it, must make certain the whole world judged the criminals who planned this atrocity."

95030

Church shaken by evidence of alleged misuse of funds by former national treasurer

by James Solheim

(ENS) The Episcopal Church--still reeling from the suicide of the bishop of Massachusetts and facing a new campaign by conservative bishops against those who have ordained noncelibate homosexuals--was further shaken by revelations that the church's former treasurer may have engaged in extensive misuse of funds.

In a sobering presentation to a retreat of the Executive Council in Providence, Rhode Island, February 13, Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and his chancellor or legal advisor, David Beers, said that they had evidence that appears to "indicate misuse of church funds" by Ellen Cooke, who resigned January 6 as treasurer.

Browning said that, when several irregularities were brought to his attention, he "immediately retained legal counsel to assist me in an investigation into these and other possible financial improprieties." That initial investigation "disclosed sufficient grounds for concern" and led to a meeting with Cooke and her husband Nicholas in Virginia where he had recently assumed the call to St. John's Church in McLean.

Evidence of the potential financial impropriety was discovered only after her resignation, Browning said, while she was serving as a consultant "to assist in the winding up of the financial affairs of the last triennium."

A sacred charge

In his address from the chair (See Newsfeatures for full text) to the opening session of the council meeting on February 15, Browning added, "Though our picture is fragmentary, and an investigation is only beginning, we already have something very painful to deal with--funds appear to have been misused." He asserted that "we have a sacred charge to act on behalf of the church, to protect our assets and our integrity as an institution. We will do so."

Browning pledged to keep the church informed as the investigation evolves, within the limits imposed by the legal aspects of the situation. The auditing firm of Coopers and Lybrand has been retained and its work could take several weeks, he said. "I regret that I am not able to say anything more about this disturbing development at this time," he said in a statement (Text in Newsfeatures section) distributed to the council and faxed to other church

leaders. "I ask for your patience, understanding and prayers at this most difficult time in the life of the church."

Small groups express pain

Meeting in small groups during their two-day retreat, council members expressed shock and anger--but also a deep concern and determination that the situation not affect the wider mission of the church. "We are trying to communicate to our people that those of us who are fiscally responsible are taking the necessary steps to get to the bottom" of the alleged financial misuse, said Bishop Don Wimberly of Lexington, Kentucky, who chairs the council's administration and finance committee. "We don't want this to damage the mission of the church," he said, adding that the committee would take a close look to make sure that sufficient safeguards are in place.

Vincent Currie, financial officer for the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast who chairs the church's Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance, echoed the comments of many council members. He admitted that he was "stunned" by the allegations. He was on the council when Cooke was hired in 1986 and has been "one of her closest associates" over the years, he said.

In the wake of the allegations, Currie emphasized that it was important to remind church members that officers of the church, at the national and diocesan level, are bonded and instances of financial misuse are rare. "As tragic as this occurrence is, the church must not let it damage the trust that members have in the church at all levels," he added. He hoped that the church would see this as an opportunity for people to express compassion for the Cooke family but be "even more fervent in helping church members learn from this experience."

Dioceses responded

Several dioceses scrambled to reassure their church members that their financial houses were in order. Bishop Richard Grein of New York, for example, wrote to his clergy to reinforce the presiding bishop's "determination not to let this incident adversely affect the wider mission of the church. Human frailty does not subtract from the necessity of mission," he said.

"Perhaps this is a good time to be grateful for the checks and balances within our own financial system which work to protect our diocese from problems of this sort," Grein said in his February 15 letter. He urged his clergy to support the national church "during this difficult time."

Bishop Peter James Lee of Virginia met with lay leaders of St. John's Church and issued a statement that there was "no evidence of any

irregularities" during the short period that Cooke was on the diocesan staff. "This situation is being met with compassion and determination to proceed with the ministry of that congregation," he said.

Cooke was elected treasurer while serving as assistant treasurer in the Diocese of Virginia and had previously served in a similar capacity for the Diocese of Massachusetts. A graduate of Georgetown University, she also served as business manager of the National Cathedral School and as a financial consultant with schools and religious organizations.

--James Solheim is director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95031

Donald Burchell elected new treasurer for Episcopal Church

by James H. Thrall

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Council member Joyce Austin of New York called Burchell "the right person at the right place at the right time," and said "his skill at interpersonal relations is exceptional." Browning underscored the faith he holds in Burchell's integrity, and Bishop Donald Wimberly, chair of the council's administration and finance committee, praised Burchell's style of interaction with the committee.

"We appreciate his openness and his wanting to be collaborative in the work of the committee," Wimberly said. The committee gave Burchell a unanimous endorsement.

Burchell stressed that safeguarding the church's funds is of "paramount importance" to him, but said that it is too early to talk about changing any specific policies and procedures of the treasurer's office. "We really have to have a clearer picture of what went on in the past," he said. Auditors have been called in to review the church's finances. "Once the work of the auditors has been completed, we'll have a clearer picture of what to do," he said. "Safeguards have always been in place. If the safeguards have failed, we need to know why."

As a bottom line, "I want to make sure that the people in the pew and at all levels of the church have trust in our financial operations," he said. "Talking about integrity and sound fiscal management isn't enough. We're going to have to continue to demonstrate that."

After a career spent in banking, Burchell said his new position "is a way of combining my commitment to the church with my professional skills and interests." He added "I've always felt stimulated by challenge, and these next days and months will not be disappointing in that area."

Burchell, who lives in Alexandria, Virginia, served with First American Bank in Washington D.C., from 1974 to 1993, attaining the position of executive vice president for professionals, private and embassy banking. He continued on as senior vice president with the bank after its merger with First Union National Bank in 1993.

Before joining First American, Burchell was a stockbroker from 1970 to 1974 with Walston & Company (now Prudential Bache) in Washington D.C. He started his career as a management trainee with United Virginia Bank in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1963, where he was promoted early to the position of assistant vice president and branch manager of the largest northern Virginia branch.

He holds a bachelor's degree from William and Mary College, and has attended the American Institute of Banking, Stonier Graduate School of Banking, ABA Graduate School of Retail Banking, and the Wharton School of Finance. He was an executive committee member and first vice president of the Washington Area Bankers Association, and a member of the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

Burchell has served on the vestry and finance committee of his parish, Christ Church (Episcopal) in Alexandria. He is a founding board member of a residential shelter for the homeless called the Carpenter's Shelter, president and board member for the Visiting Nurse Association of Northern

Virginia, and board member of Junior Achievement of Metropolitan Washington. He also has headed fund-raising activities for numerous non-profit groups.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95032

Executive Council calls communication key to church's healing

by James H. Thrall

(ENS) The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church underscored the importance of communication--both of good news and bad--in a meeting dominated by the report of possible misuse of funds by the church's former treasurer.

Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, February 13-17, council members struggled with their own reactions to the difficult news. Having shared the "common pain, common tragedy" through the meeting, the members may well have become "more of a council" as a result, observed Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning. And several members expressed their hopes that the event, rather than impede the church's mission, might in a similar way draw the church together. The key to that, they said, was as complete disclosure of the facts of the case as possible.

Council retreat provides setting for startling news

Little in the way of details was known, Browning said, beyond that certain "irregularities" had been discovered after the departure of Ellen Cooke, who resigned as treasurer January 6. He reported that an independent auditing firm, Coopers and Lybrand, had been called in and was expected to produce a report in a few weeks. He promised to share as much as possible within limits imposed by legal considerations.

Given the shocked response of council members, the timing of the two-

day retreat before the council meeting itself was a "grace-filled" coincidence, offering a spiritual context in which to deal with the news, Browning noted. "No one knew when we made our plans how very necessary those days would be, or what they would hold."

In a candid presentation toward the end of the meeting, Browning and Diane Porter, senior executive for program, described a three-way working relationship with Cooke that they admitted had hampered the work of the national church office. A retreat in September for 40 senior staff members brought issues to a head, they said, and pushed the three to meet with a consultant to improve their working relationships.

At the retreat, "a lot was put out on the table, and it was put out about as frankly as I've ever seen," Browning said. The picture presented, he said, was of staff "living in separate boxes" or in "two silos" that represented the units directed by Cooke and Porter. "We engaged in interdepartmental competition as though it were an Olympic event," agreed Porter.

Porter acknowledged regret for what she called her own "complicity" and pledged a more cooperative style, noting that she already finds collaboration easier with Donald Burchell, elected by the council to replace Cooke as treasurer (see separate article). "We talk a common language. We laugh at the same time. We smile at the same time. We cry at the same time," she said. Browning, Porter and Burchell will continue to work with the consultant and have pledged to meet regularly to keep lines of communication open.

Addresses underscore shared leadership

In a departure from tradition, both Browning and Pamela Chinnis, who as president of General Convention's House of Deputies serves as the council's vice-chair, addressed the council.

Chinnis described the daunting task of making committee appointments that adequately balance different elements and views of the church. "Bishop Browning, of course, has a fixed pool of bishops from which to make all his appointments, but there are many thousands of potential clerical and lay appointees," she said. "The problem is finding them, and matching them to actual vacancies."

In the current balance, "30 percent of the clerical members on interim bodies are women, and of those whose race or ethnicity is known, 22 percent are not white," she said. "Of lay members, 30 percent are women and 32 percent minorities."

The structure of the committees themselves is under review, she added, and will be discussed at a joint meeting in Minneapolis next October of all the

interim bodies that meet between General Conventions.

The church is strengthened by differing opinions unless "we believe our meaning is the only meaning," Browning said in his address. "Tolerance is just not enough," he said. "It isn't good enough if you are trying to follow the way of Christ, the way of the cross. We are called to go much deeper into the meaning of the other."

Browning decried what he called diversions that pull the church from the path of accomplishing its mission. "Enormous amounts of energy that should be used responding to the imperatives of the gospel, are diverted by inappropriate demands and preoccupations," he said. "We need to deal with what's on our plate and not lose sight of our call to mission."

While Browning and Chinnis called their collaboration a natural outgrowth of their close working relationship, the council encouraged making the shared leadership a formal policy.

Follow-up visits to dioceses

To help strengthen ties to the wider church, the council endorsed a second round of the visits members made to virtually all the church's dioceses before the 1994 General Convention. In the first six months of 1996, members will once again fan out across the country to listen and respond to what dioceses say about the church's mission.

The first in a series of more targeted visits to dioceses this year provided a wealth of information about possible shared ministries, Browning reported. The trip by Browning, Chinnis, Porter and other national church staff to the Diocese of Nevada offered "a new model of a relationship that can be held up to the national church," he said.

"We have something to give from the national program," said Porter, "but they have much to give to us."

Over the next few months, trips are scheduled to the dioceses of Connecticut, Olympia and Mississippi. Council members urged that the targeted trips made in the future include some of the dioceses that have been less supportive of the national church program.

Ecumenical dialogue forges bonds

Noting that "some would say this is the winter of ecumenism," the Rev. David Perry, the church's new ecumenical officer, suggested that the opposite is true, offering as examples current collaboration with both the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches.

A recent pilgrimage by Catholic and Episcopal bishops to Canterbury and Rome underscored that "the ecumenical enterprise is humans in relation to

other humans," reported Bishop Frank Griswold of Chicago, co-chair of the dialogue with Roman Catholics in this country. The day-to-day events of the journey, as much as any theological discussions, he said, provided "a much deeper sense of unity."

In a second report, Bishop Ted Jones of the Diocese of Indianapolis called himself "a passionate advocate" for the Episcopal-Lutheran Concordat that, if approved in 1997, will bring the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) into "full communion." The concordat will not merge the two churches, but will "enable us to do things together that we have rarely done before," he said, especially in sharing ministries and resources.

The council will invite ELCA representatives to its future meetings and encouraged provincial, diocesan and local church bodies to arrange similar dialogues. They also endorsed the idea of meeting with the ELCA's Church Council to parallel a planned joint meeting of Episcopal and Lutheran bishops.

Peace and justice key to program resolutions

Council approved creation of a committee to be called the "justice, peace and integrity of creation committee" that will assist with "strategies for justice" at all levels and will advise the council and national church staff on "issues and concerns of church members regarding ministries for social, economic and environmental justice and stewardship."

The council put in motion calls by General Convention and Executive Council to support shareholder resolutions on a wide range of social issues, and pledged to continue to "seek to work in partnership with government" to "promote peace with justice and social well-being for all in the United States."

The council gave strong support to women's ministries, endorsing the Anglican Women's Network, which helps connect Anglican women's organizations around the world, and reaffirmed the United Nations convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

A committee formed by the administration and finance committee and made up of council members, was asked to look into claims of high administrative costs and possible overfunding of the pension accounts at the Church Pension Fund.

Approval was completed for several resolutions authorizing and continuing world mission work that were brought originally to General Convention but not finally approved because of an oversight. Council members also elected Judy Conley of Iowa to replace Pam Chinnis as the third U.S. representative to the Anglican Consultative Council, the international group that helps direct the inter-relations of the Anglican Communion.

The council also urged dioceses that host their meetings to include youth in their presentations to the council, and encouraged council members to participate in youth events at all levels of the church.

--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.

95033

Rwandans rebuild their lives in midst of demands for justice

by Jack Donovan

(ENS) While some Rwandans try to piece together their lives after the war and genocide that shattered their country, others say there can be no peace and reconciliation until those responsible for the violence are brought to justice.

Outward signs suggest that the new government of Rwanda, comprised of Tutsis and moderate Hutus, has been successful in its effort to rebuild the country after the genocide and war that took over a million lives last year. In the countryside, cattle graze and fields are prepared for sowing, and in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, water and electricity is in greater supply than in neighboring countries, phones work most of the time, and the streets are well lit and safe.

But across the Rwandan borders in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, muddy refugee camps controlled by the leaders of the militias that were responsible for the genocide in 1994 are crowded with over a million Hutus. United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) soldiers, mainly from Africa, offer the refugees and internally displaced people a free ride home under military escort, enough rations for a month and some basic farm tools, but few accept because they have been told that they will be killed if they return to Rwanda.

"The leaders of the camps, unwittingly aided and abetted by the UN and the international humanitarian agencies, hope that if they stall long enough, they will not have to pay for their actions. They also want to rebuild their army and militias to invade our country or destabilize it further," said

Christine Umutoni, deputy minister of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the government which is dominated by the Rwanda Patriotic Front, a Tutsi-led group that defeated the Hutu army in July 1994.

Aiding the killers?

The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that oversee the refugee camps and that are coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are aware that they are helping killers in the camps but insist that it is unfair to expect Hutus to return home until they are confident they will be safe from reprisals and that their land will still be theirs to till.

Umutoni disagrees. "The fear of violence and revenge is nothing more than an excuse used by the old extremist government--which says its only mistake was that it failed to finish off all the Tutsis--to deny the reality of a new government or national unity," she said.

She said that the goal of reconciliation between the factions in the country and in the refugee camps could only be reached by bringing those guilty of the genocide to justice. And she declared that this could only be achieved with international assistance. "Genocide is the whole world's problem," she said. "We could do this justice ourselves, but we think the world, which has a convention against genocide requiring governments to act against it, must make certain the whole world judged the criminals who planned this atrocity."

A tribunal would also accomplish the task of separating the planners of the genocide from the innocent. Surviving Hutus, many of whom also lost family members, feel they all stand accused of genocide. "It is very painful to be a Hutu these days. The mass media paints us all as killers and rapists, but many of us tried very hard to save lives," said Bishop Norman Kayumba, acting dean of the country's Anglican bishops.

No easy reconciliation

But while international assistance may be sought for the task of bringing the planners of the genocide to justice, many Rwandans criticize the attempts by international NGOs to reconcile the country's factions. "The Europeans want an easy reconciliation because they feel guilty that they did so little," said Father Tito, director of the Christus Center where 17 sisters and priests were machine-gunned to death by the Hutu Presidential Guard. "We have been through a cataclysm. Ethnicity has been blamed, but it is not a curse, it is a fact. We cannot take a six-month seminar in reconciliation and say everything is now fine. It must be a long and painful process. We are all traumatized. We have not even grieved or buried our dead. We do not even

know where our dead have been dumped," he said.

Bishop Jonathan Ruhumuliza of Kigali's Anglican diocese agrees that reconciliation is meaningless at this stage. "We need healing first. I think many people are ready to repent. No one is innocent. I know I was not courageous enough and I am sorry for that. Now we have to make certain as churches that it never happens again," he said.

Ruhumuliza said that church leaders must reflect on their failure to speak out but he does not think church leaders should be removed from office because "the new ones could make the same mistake and could become as close to the new government as we are accused of being to the former government. Instead we must understand why we are so weak."

--Jack Donovan is communications assistant for the Episcopal News Service. This story is based on reports from the All Africa Council of Churches.



news briefs

95034

Clarence Pope officially joins Roman Catholic Church

(ENS) Clarence Pope, former bishop of the Diocese of Ft. Worth (Texas), took vows in a Roman Catholic mass celebrated by Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston. The mass was held at St. Mary the Virgin Catholic Church in Arlington, a former Episcopal congregation. He is expected to seek ordination later as a Catholic priest. Law is ecclesiastical delegate to the Vatican, in charge of a "pastoral provision" approved in 1980 that allows married Episcopal priests to become Roman Catholic clergy. According to an article in the Ft. Worth *Star-Telegram*, two other Episcopal clergy in the diocese have resigned and announced their intention to seek ordination as Roman Catholic priests under the provision. The Rev. Martin Nelson, former rector of St. Anne's, left the church January 1 and the Rev. James Hart, an associate at St. Andrew's, resigned in February. The two clergy said that they are meeting with a group of Episcopalians who want to switch to Roman Catholicism.

Churches blamed as AIDS spreads among Kenyan Christians

(END) Professor Joseph Maina Mungai, former vice-chancellor of Nairobi University, recently stated that the rate of AIDS infection is higher among African Christians than among followers of other faiths like Islam, Judaism and Buddhism because Christian churches have contributed to the spread of the virus by obscuring the issue of sexuality. Speaking at the 16th African Science Congress in Nairobi, he attributed the spread of the virus among Christians to the role the churches played in destroying traditional cultural practices in Kenya. He said that in some instances the churches had helped perpetuate myths about African people and about their cultural practices which had been branded as "evil." He argued the church should play a more central role in demystifying sexuality by increasing awareness about AIDS rather than condemning people based on their understanding of sin.

Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholics seek unity

(ENS) Recent talks held between the Vatican and the Moscow

Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church marked an important step towards Christian reunification by reducing "mutual misunderstandings and feelings of distance" between the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches, according to a senior Vatican official. Orthodox representatives said the meeting pointed to the settlement of long-running disputes over the role of Roman Catholics in the former Soviet Union. "I think we made some progress during the meeting," Cardinal Edward Cassidy told a Russian Roman Catholic news agency, *Istina i Zyzn* (Truth and Light). "Real dialogue on issues currently causing Catholic-Orthodox misunderstanding is very important for the wider unity of Christians. This makes the open, friendly atmosphere of our latest talks particularly significant," he said.

Lutherans seek breakthrough with Roman Catholics

(ENI) Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), recently said that the LWF is planning a joint official statement with Roman Catholics to heal long-standing doctrinal divisions between the two confessions. Noko said that he hoped the next LWF general assembly, in Hong Kong in 1997, will agree to a joint statement with the Roman Catholic church allowing the two confessions to lift mutual condemnations, which date back to the 16th century, about the "doctrine of justification." The doctrine of justification was a central issue on which the German reformer Martin Luther broke with the Roman Catholic church in 1517, marking the start of the Reformation. Luther believed that human beings are declared by God to be justified not on the basis of their own "strength, merits or works" but by faith alone. The year 1997 marks the 450th anniversary of the 1547 Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent in which the Roman Catholic church condemned the Lutheran doctrine.

Kenya's churches defend Anglican bishop

(ENI) Church leaders and opposition politicians have come out recently in defense of Bishop David Gitari of the Anglican Province of Kenya who has been accused of spreading a rumor of a plot to overthrow the Kenyan government. A government statement that was broadcast over Kenya radio and television linked Gitari with "Brigadier" John Odongo's Uganda-based February 18 movement and its military wing, the February 18 Popular Resistance army. "I have rigorously preached against lawlessness, and even became a victim of vicious attacks, and therefore the question of liaising with criminals should not arise," Gitari said. The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) led the condemnation of the government statement which came soon after Gitari delivered a sermon on rumors about the health of President

Daniel arap Moi. The NCCCK's secretary-general, Mutava Musyimi, said the accusations against Gitari were unfounded. Musayimi said that Kenya's executive, judiciary and legislature were being manipulated to benefit individuals in power and that the country was being fragmented along ideological and ethnic lines. Roman Catholic and Anglican officials said the government's statement seemed to point to further tribal clashes and more attempts by the government to divert attention from other serious issues. Moi, whose government has also been criticized by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, said that there was no point in "our Western friends telling us to be transparent but at the same time ignoring corruption in the non-governmental organizations and religious organizations." He singled out the NCCCK in particular, challenging the organization to reveal how much money it received from donors and spent on projects.

Colombian church leader calls for defense of human rights

(ENI) Colombian Roman Catholic Bishop Jaime Prieto Amaya recently declared that the defense of human rights in Colombia is part of the "prophetic task of the church which is to denounce injustice." Speaking before the European Conference on Human Rights in Colombia at the European Parliament in Brussels, he said that "for a long time Colombia has experienced many forms of violence. It has not been possible to establish adequate methods to combat this violence." Since 1986, about 20,000 people have been killed for political reasons, and 600,000 have been forced to abandon their homes to escape death threats, according to Amnesty International.

Church leaders remember Dresden bombing

(ENI) Hundreds of people crowded into Dresden's Kreuzkirche (Church of the Cross) on February 13 for an ecumenical service of remembrance at which church leaders from Germany and Britain marked the destruction of the city by Allied fire bombing 50 years ago. In his sermon, Anglican Bishop Simon Barrington-Ward of Coventry called on Christians to work for peace and justice in the world. He warned that "racism, nationalism, and reliance on violence are still all too normal--even among Christians." Bombing by British and U.S. forces killed up to 35,000 people in Dresden from February 13 to 15, 1945. Military historians say that there was little military or strategic justification for the fire bombing.

Ex-Yugoslav leader calls for recognition of church

(ENI) Kiro Gligorov, president of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), recently criticized Serbian Orthodox leaders for

refusing to recognize the FYROM's breakaway Orthodox church. "When the Macedonian republic proclaimed independence, the Yugoslav army peacefully withdrew by agreement. Today, we are certain that it is in the interests of both countries that we recognize each other and begin normal, friendly co-operation," he said. "However, the attitude of the Serbian clergy is not the same as that of the Yugoslav authorities. Inevitably, this is causing a lack of trust, since it is seen as expressing the old claims of our neighbors over Macedonia's national identity and statehood." Georges Tsetsis, the Ecumenical Patriarchate's representative at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, said, "This whole issue of the Orthodox Church in FYROM is painful, but it should clearly be solved according to Orthodox church discipline and law, not on the basis of secular criteria."

Episcopal Family Ministries offers resource

(ENS) Episcopal Family Ministries has announced the release of *Being God's Family: A Notebook for Family Ministry in the 21st Century*. According to the notebook's producers, "Each of the articles in *Being God's Family* includes practical illustrations of what the church can do and is doing to strengthen families and connect them with the community of faith." The culmination of two years of research and preparation, the notebook contains sections on "successful and creative ministries in the inner city and rural America" as well as on building ministry to families in the suburbs, and workshop designs for reinvigorating current ministries. The Episcopal Family Network was established by the 1979 General Convention "to encourage ministry within the family and provide resources to strengthen them." *Being God's Family* is available for \$22 (includes three ring notebook with dividers) or \$17 (text only) from Episcopal Family Network, c/o St. Giles' Episcopal Church, 3025 Walters Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062.

People

The Rev. Jonathan T. Glass was recently named assistant director to the National Association of Episcopal Schools. He is rector of St. Mark's Church and School in Upland, California. He will assume his post on July 1, 1995.



news features

95035

Episcopal doctors offer aid and hope in Bosnia

by Anne McConney

(ENS) Saint Anthony's Pharmacy, headed by Dr. James Tryon and his wife, Dr. Teresa Balcomb, of Saint Michael's parish in Albuquerque, speeds help and healing to the battered population of Bosnia, providing not only medicines and other supplies but hope as well.

The Pharmacy, an organization that provides "the most needed medical supplies [to] the most needy populations without regard to political affiliation, religion, nationality or ethnic distinction," recently received a \$40,000 grant from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.

"It couldn't have come at a better time," said Tryon. "Being reliable and predictable is crucial in an effort like this. Receiving the grant has allowed us to solidify our credibility."

Saint Anthony's Pharmacy currently is recruiting 1,000 persons to donate \$10 a month for two years, and is about a third of the way to its goal. "We've promised \$10,000 worth of medicine a month," Tryon said, "and so far we're on schedule."

Shorter supply lines

The Pharmacy purchases its medicines and supplies in Bosnia and has contracted with a physician there, Dr. Branka Sivric, to determine exactly what is needed. "The best quality medicine can be purchased more predictably than if it were acquired by donation. It also has longer expiration dates," Tryon said. Sivric has arranged for the medicines to be purchased under a "humanitarian aid" title, which significantly lowers the price. "The medicines are delivered free, and the supply lines are much shorter than if we were sending it from the U.S.," Tryon said.

An additional benefit, he noted, is that the medical supplies arrive labeled in Croatian, the language of the country, making them easier for local

doctors to use and providing a psychological boost for the people "when they see some important things are still functioning."

Saint Anthony's Pharmacy has, for the present, limited itself to the geographical area around Mostar, a city with a prewar population of 120,000, located some 55 miles south of Sarajevo. The area is one of the hardest hit in a war that has produced over 200,000 casualties and 3.5 million refugees. Sivric herself is a refugee from Sarajevo.

The medicines are distributed from a warehouse in Medjugorje to clinics throughout the Mostar area. The Roman Catholic Franciscan friars of the region have "aided us in everything from storing and distributing the medicines to driving the supply trucks," Tryon said. "And because they have such a powerful influence in the local communities, they help protect our supply lines from military factions and black marketeering."

Effective relief efforts

Both Tryon and Balcomb specialized in emergency medicine and had a keen interest in disaster relief that led them to launch Saint Anthony's in 1992.

"I researched the literature to see what impact war has on a population," Tryon said, "and then formulated an hypothesis to predict what the medicine shortages would be." A first visit to Bosnia--there have been several since--confirmed his suspicions. It has also left him convinced that much good-hearted relief effort is useless.

"I've seen whole warehouses in Bosnia filled with useless medicines sent over as relief supplies," he said. "I understand that people are very well intentioned. We go to our closets and clean out the old clothing or into the medicine cabinet and empty it of partially used or expired medicine. That makes us feel good--but it's not effective relief work."

The bulk of international aid will probably evaporate as soon as Bosnia is no longer front page news, yet the suffering of the people will continue for a long time to come. "Even if the war ended tomorrow," he said, "I would predict that there will be urgent need in Bosnia for at least another five years."

--Anne McConney is editor of *The Rio Grande Episcopalian*.

95036

Migration Ministries director urges church to advocate refugee rights

by David Skidmore

(ENS) As public sentiment mounts against illegal immigrants, the Episcopal Church's outreach agency for refugees is marshaling its forces to counteract an emerging bias against all immigrants.

In a hard-hitting address to 50 diocesan refugee coordinators meeting in suburban Chicago February 7-12, Richard Parkins, director of Episcopal Migrations Ministries (EMM), challenged the coordinators to be "a moral sensitizing force" that alerts their communities and congregations to a worldwide refugee crisis that has forced millions from their homes. Diminished public support toward immigrants and the intractability of the social and political upheaval that has spawned the crisis, he said, should not be excuses to sit on the sidelines.

"Our perplexity should not lead to moral indifference or social inaction," said Parkins. "As people of faith we must remind others that our sisters and brothers need our help. We cannot permit ourselves a narrowing definition of community to protect ourselves from human crises that would otherwise shock us."

Parkins, who was appointed EMM director last October, delivered a blistering critique of California's Proposition 187 in his address at the annual network meeting. Proposition 187, which was overwhelmingly approved by voters last November but later set aside by a U.S. District Court, prohibits illegal immigrants from receiving any public assistance, including basic schooling for children, health care, food assistance and low-income housing.

In passing Proposition 187, California voters have unleashed a wave of nativism and parochialism under the guise of law, said Parkins. "Immigrants are being scapegoated more today than at any time in recent history. While Proposition 187 has not been implemented, the resounding victory it received at the polls sends a chilling message to immigrants that they are a burden and unwelcome," he said.

In response, the church must live up to its calling as a moral force, said Parkins, and promote the success stories of its work with immigrants and refugees. The rising negative tide should not go unchallenged, but be exposed as "shameless hyperbole." He argued that "human triumph is a powerful antidote to the current rush to immigrant bashing."

Credibility as advocates

Parkins' call for more vocal advocacy of refugee interests was the major theme for the four-day training and networking event--and was echoed by seven other speakers.

Charles Sykes of the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration praised non-profit organizations for the indispensable role they play in resettling refugees. He paid special tribute to EMM for not following the lead of other church agencies that accept refugees according to religious affiliation. He also praised non-profit agencies for providing cost-effective, culturally sensitive programs in easing refugees' transition to U.S. society, something that federal, state and local governments don't seem able to do. That experience, and their religious motivation, gives non-profits a credibility as refugee advocates that government agencies can't hope to match, said Sykes. "No one will be able to explain a lot of these issues, especially as we get into this debate, better than you," he said.

That debate, which in the last Congress generated measures ranging from denying relief to undocumented victims of the recent Los Angeles earthquakes to requiring citizenship as a precondition for receiving federal benefits--none of which passed--promises to be more divisive with the 104th Congress, according to Sykes. With their knowledge and experience, groups like EMM can provide a counterpoint to inflammatory rhetoric that ignores the distinction between legal and illegal immigration, he contended.

Keeping legal and illegal immigration separate--and actively promoting the one while opposing the other--will prove crucial in the coming battle to preserve the United States as a haven for legitimate refugees, said Sykes. "There is definitely going to be an effort to curb illegal immigration, both in Congress and the Administration." According to Sykes, President Clinton is strongly committed to bringing the number of undocumented immigrants down, which in 1993 reached 3.8 million undocumented immigrants.

"By closing this back door on illegal immigration, it ensures that we keep the front door open for legal migration," said Sykes.

Tougher stance

Given the rhetoric sweeping the country and Congress, Clinton had little option except to toughen his Administration's stance. A number of Republicans, both in the House and Senate, Sykes pointed out later, are drafting or have introduced measures that toughen penalties on illegal immigrants while reducing the number of refugees admitted for resettlement and cutting back on overseas humanitarian aid.

The Clinton bill proposes stiffer penalties, said Sykes, "but nowhere

near to the extent of what California is proposing." And while reducing the number of refugees admitted to the United States, it does so more gradually than other measures that have been introduced in Congress. Wyoming's Senator Alan Simpson, for example, has introduced a bill that proposes a 50,000 ceiling and trim overall immigration from 700,000 to 500,000 a year, said Sykes, though it allows Congress to boost the number with the assent of the Administration.

Last year the State Department admitted 120,000 refugees and this year has set the limit at 110,000, said Sykes. The 1996 level will most certainly be lower, but the actual number won't be set until after public hearings later this year.

Explosion of refugees

The federal cutback is coming at a time of explosive growth in refugee populations. Conflicts in Bosnia, Somalia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and the Nagorno-Karabakh have swelled the number of refugees to 23 million, and displaced another 20 million. With the government cutting its assistance, the State Department would like to see non-profit agencies fill the gap. That's an option that troubles Parkins.

"I don't think churches or the private sector can pick up that slack," said Parkins. "To some extent we have to resist that." Even if churches and other non-profits had funds to spare, it's not appropriate for them to pick up the tab, said Parkins, given that "the refugees are here as a matter of national policy." Their plight is the result of a government decision, whether of the United States or the country of origin, and the cost should fall to the government, he said, since it is orchestrating their resettlement.

Presently EMM receives \$2 million annually from the State Department to resettle refugees, most of it in the form of per capita payments of \$432 for each refugee assigned to EMM for resettlement. Support from the Episcopal Church consists of overhead for EMM offices in the Episcopal Church Center in New York, and a nominal sum for contingencies and grants and loans to individual refugees in extreme need (in 1994 it amounted to \$6,000). The good news this year, said Parkins, is that EMM will be eligible for a \$357,000 grant from the State Department which the church must match through donations of cash, goods and services or through other grants.

Though he doesn't want to see the Episcopal Church become the bankroller for refugee resettlement, Parkins does support increasing the resettlements handled by EMM since that is its mission. "Though advocacy is important, our ability to do advocacy presumes we can do the job of resettlement," he said. "So we have to tend to the store."

Competing with other issues

Parkins does acknowledge that refugee resettlement must compete with other pressing social issues for a congregation's time and energy. "We do have to recognize we're standing in queue with a lot of other worthwhile causes," he said. Yet, "there is a lot of potential out there. Once a parish does it, then it may want to do more of it. But it's a lot of hard work."

Aware of the limits on most diocesan budgets, Parkins encouraged the diocesan coordinators to work with other non-profits for grants, and tap sources that aren't explicitly serving refugees. This last approach will mean redefining refugees as residents, he said, and "as legitimate contenders for the services that other groups in need within the community seek" whether they are women, children, the elderly or the disabled.

Given the present tenor in Congress and in the country as a whole, said Parkins "If we do not speak for refugees and immigrants, who will?"

--David Skidmore is communications officer for the Diocese of Chicago.

95037

Address from the Chair from the Presiding Bishop for the Executive Council meeting in Providence, Rhode Island

My dear friends, it has been a blessing and grace beyond measure that we planned to spend the first two days of our time together in a retreat. No one knew when we made our plans how very necessary those days would be, or what they would hold. As Michael Ingham quite wonderfully showed us: we are searching for Christ in the spaces between us. We are learning once again that new life isn't about resuscitation. New life is about resurrection.

I thank God for the time we have had together, and I thank this Council for all you are to me. Together, we move on, under the discipline of God, and with the grace of God.

Our sisters and brothers from Rhode Island have a copy of my statement so they will understand what I am referring to. We have had a great deal to swallow here, to absorb, in a very short time. It is difficult to get it down, to believe it. Though our picture is fragmentary, and an investigation

is only beginning, we already have something very painful to deal with: funds appear to have been misused. Our response, given our fiduciary responsibility, is governed by procedures appropriate to our role. We have a sacred charge to act on behalf of the church: to protect our assets and our integrity as an institution. We will do so.

At a deeper level, we are called to respond as a faith community. It is as a community of faith that we find our primary identity. To respond in faith will demand of us that we place ourselves, daily, again and again, under the guidance of the Lord. This requires prayer, and discipline, and the grace of God.

We have learned some valuable lessons from other sad and difficult things we have faced when those who have been part of our faith community have erred and strayed. I daresay, these hard lessons will serve us well now.

First, we have learned that we must speak nothing but the truth, in spite of our shame, and our own difficulty in accepting the part of the truth that we have learned. We don't yet know the full truth, and cannot speak it. However, we must say nothing that is untrue. Speculation is unwise, irresponsible, and possibly destructive.

We have learned that we are to share one another's burdens, and heal one another's wounds, as Christ would have us do. We have begun to do this, within our fellowship, and we must continue to do that as we leave this place. Some of the wounds will be very deep and I know no more powerful medicine than our prayers.

I still have a great deal to learn about praying for those who hurt me most. I don't think I am alone in this. Now, sadly, we have an occasion for greater learning about that. I pray God that our hearts and minds will conform as closely as possible to what we believe Jesus would have us do. The compassion of our hearts cannot be withheld from those who have wounded our hearts. God is just, and also full of compassion.

My dear friends, it is now our task to make meaning of these events in our lives, of all events in our lives, in the context of God's redemptive love. Our faith is a faith of redemption. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that lies beyond the power of God's redemption.

In the 1400's in England, William Langland wrote: "But all the wickedness in the world which man might do or think is no more to the mercy of God than a live coal dropped into the sea."

We spoke yesterday about the proper work of Executive Council. I would like to suggest that making meaning of our lives, discerning God's hand in them, and determining a faithful response to God's call, is our fundamental reason for coming together.

The Rev. Martin Smith, who is the superior of the Society of Saint John the

Evangelist, is the chaplain, along with the Rev. Curtis Almquist, also of that religious order, for the House of Bishops. At a meeting of our planning committee in December, Martin reflected on how all groups of people, gathered together, are in the business of organizing meaningfulness. Out of the thicket of experiences that confront us, we search for meaning, which is of course based on our world view, our paradigm.

He said if we believe our meaning is the only meaning, we can't go any deeper than a state of coexistence with other un-like-minded people. We coexist and don't engage in the meaning of the other. We can, and sometimes do, come to a place of tolerance. Certainly we have seen this in the church. Sadly, we have also seen some ruptures in the tolerance. Tolerance, however, isn't good enough. It isn't good enough if you are trying to follow the way of Christ, the way of the cross. We are called to go much deeper into the meaning of the other. We are called to engage in the struggle of the other to make meaning. We are called to meet at a level where everyone understands that we are all struggling to make meaning. Martin said that meeting at that level calls for a courageous spirit, and for grace. He also said that in struggling together you discover that you needed them--the other--you needed them for your jigsaw puzzle. You then share occasions of awareness that someone different was someone you needed. You needed their meaning in order to make sense of things yourself.

It is, and has been for nine years, the deepest yearning of my heart that the people of this church dare to meet at that level. That we recognize we are all struggling to make meaning in a chaotic world, in a chaotic church -- that we are called to be together in that, to take the risk of putting our own meaning on the table, realizing it isn't the only one. That is a risk. We are afraid.

I want to name right now that I believe some of the most grievous ruptures in tolerance in this church are grounded in fear. It is fear clad in various guises. I have heard this fear when we try to struggle together about the ordination of women. I have heard it when we try to talk about the ordination of gays and lesbians in committed relationships, or more accurately put, when we try to talk about acknowledging that gays have always been part of the ordained ministry of this church, and of all churches.

When you hear people trumpet that they, and only they, are right, listen closely. Underneath that almost inevitably is a note of fear, terror even, terror that: "I might be wrong. My meaning may not be the only meaning."

My friends, if we invest ourselves and our souls in the rightness of any position, if we draw our identity from espousing any position, when it is

challenged, we are threatened. We fear that we will lose ourselves. We will be obliterated. That is terrifying. It explains the vehemence, and sometimes mean spiritedness, which too often replaces reasoned discourse in our families, in our church and in our public life. Our culture is littered with examples of just such mean spiritedness, and even violence, that come when we fear or are unable to respect views other than our own, when winning the point is the goal, and not coming to the best solution.

The reason for this Council, and this church, and other people of faith to reason together, to make meaning together, is so that we may show the world the way. "I am the life, and the truth, and the way," said the Lord. We have heard that message and we are bound to repeat it. And how very desperately that word is needed. We can hardly be taken seriously as people who are following a way, indeed a person who is Jesus the Christ, if we don't seem to follow that way very well ourselves, if we lose the path, break the thread.

Many of you know that I like to walk. Most afternoons I try to take a walk before supper, which clears my head and takes out the kinks. I tend to move along at rather a brisk pace, though I have to pay attention to the Walk and Don't Walk signs. Even though walking in itself is my goal, rather than the destination, I move along in a purposeful way.

There is another kind of walk I take, whenever I get the chance, which isn't often enough to suit me, and that is a walk with one of my grandchildren, those who have learned to walk that is. Anyone who has taken a walk with a child knows that there can be lots of diversions along the way. The destination is secondary to what adventures you may have. You might stop to turn over a rock, or to pick up a leaf. You might find a dog to say hello to, or a pond to skip a stone across, or a puddle. If you are willing to be diverted from your path, you might discover some wonderful things, just looking through the eyes of that child. You might have some amazing adventures, among the ordinary things, straying from your route.

There is a certain tension, a creative dynamic tension, between following the path in a very inflexible fashion on the one hand, and getting so pulled from the path by diversions and distractions along the way that you don't ever get to where you are trying to go.

My friends, I believe we in the church experience that tension all the time. We are on a path, on a journey. We have been given a mission. We are following Jesus. Even so, we don't just press right along. We get pulled from the path. We are diverted, distracted. Some of our diversions are part of what we need to attend to along the way. I would put in that category pastoral care of those walking with us.

There are other diversions, things that pull me, and this church, from the path, that I do not welcome and that I respond to with some anger. I believe there are times when we are pulled off our course, diverted from our mission in ways that are not creative, not part of our learning, but actually destructive. There is a great deal of mischief in institutional life, and even evil abroad in the world. We know this from reading the paper, from watching television--where the public taste for violence and scandal seems insatiable. We even know this from life in our own church. Enormous amounts of energy that should be used responding to the imperatives of the gospel are diverted by inappropriate demands and preoccupations.

I want to share with you that those words were written before I heard the first suggestions of financial irregularities. As I wrote them, I was thinking of other things that pull us from our path. I was thinking of the tragedy of Bishop David Johnson's suicide. I was thinking of the presentment of a bishop of our church by ten other bishops of our church for ordaining a gay man who was in a relationship. I was thinking of how we need to deal with what is put on our plates, and not lose sight of our call to mission.

Knowing when to march along, and when to stop and tend to the rocks and side paths along the way, is an act of discernment. Discernment is the fruit of a life of prayer. That is why these last two days here, our retreat, have been so important.

Despite all of the heartaches and distractions of recent days, I heard a clear call from this Council for a focus on mission. I praise God for that. We are on a path and we are going to press on.

During the visit to Nevada we heard again and again how important the partnership with the national church is for the grassroots efforts. Over and over again welfare reform was mentioned, and the need for the church to bring the insights of our faith to the national debate. This in itself should be a spur to us. Our voice must be heard in the national forum. We are called in every age to witness to God's Love.

Today, our nation is debating the role of government in society. Our country's social values are up for grabs and we need to articulate how this church feels about those values. This kind of advocacy at the national level is a natural partner to the grassroots efforts going on all around the church, such as those we saw in Nevada.

You have a resolution before you which I requested the staff to prepare. It reaffirms the church's call to advocacy for justice and to remind our elected leaders of their duty to provide for the common good. I encourage you to engage this resolution and bring your interpretation of the gospel imperatives to it. It is crucial that our brother and sister Episcopalians, as well as the larger society, hear from us on matters that affect our national

life, and by extension, life around the world.

On our visit this past weekend to Nevada, I was given the privilege of going to a small congregation, one that is just bursting with possibilities. That congregation is outside of Las Vegas, Nevada, and it is called Grace in the Desert, which I think is a profoundly wonderful name.

I celebrated the Eucharist and preached to the children and adults. I was asked by the priest if I would go back where people were making their communion--for the laying on of hands for healing. After people received their communion they would come to the back and the line was so long that they finally had to end the service. People went out with a blessing, and people kept coming. The two other clergy and a couple of lay people came and stood with me, and when a person would come up, I would ask them, "What would you like me to pray for?"

I remember one father saying to me, "My sixteen-year-old daughter is struggling valiantly, trying to discover a sense of values and she is having a terrible time." I laid my hands and we prayed. Then a woman came and she said, "I just had a double mastectomy and am under treatment of chemotherapy and need strength." Then a very attractive young woman in her late twenties--actually two or three people said that this is the first time they have come to this church--she said that she was jobless and had been jobless for a month. She said, "I have two children that I am having a hard time feeding." Then there came a couple who said their marriage was falling apart and they would like to find a way to rediscover their commitment. We laid hands on them. A middle-aged person came and said her friend, who was quite aged, was having a difficult time coming to understand that she needed other people to care for her. She said, "Would you pray for us both?" Then a father came and said, "I have just lost three members of my family in a car crash last month, and I can't tell you about my brokenness, the depth of it." Then there was a young man who came up and said this past Friday he found out he had the HIV virus.

I mentioned earlier Sally Bucklee's quote from Gustavo Gutierrez. My favorite quote from that same conference is that the church's task is to preach a gospel of hope in a society of death.

The Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning
Presiding Bishop and Primate
February 15, 1995

95038

Statement by the Presiding Bishop to the Executive Council and the Church Center staff

On January 6, 1995, Ellen Cooke submitted to me her resignation as treasurer of the Executive Council and of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, effective January 31, 1995. Mrs. Cooke and I agreed at that time that she would remain as a consultant for a brief period to assist in the winding up of the financial affairs of the last triennium.

Last week, on February 7, I was informed by members of the Treasurer's Office that they had, within the past several days, discovered evidence of certain irregularities in the management of the church's financial affairs. This evidence appeared to indicate misuse of church funds by Mrs. Cooke during some portion of her tenure as treasurer.

I immediately retained legal counsel to assist me in an investigation into these and other possible financial improprieties. Preliminary results of that investigation disclosed sufficient grounds for concern to inform Mrs. Cooke, which I did in a meeting in Virginia with her and her husband on February 9, and also to engage the services of an independent accounting firm to conduct a full review.

Throughout these initial steps I have kept leaders of the council and the Program, Budget and Finance Committee of the General Convention fully informed.

I regret that I am not able to say anything more about this disturbing development at this time. I hope that our investigation will be completed in a matter of weeks, and that I can make a full report to the council, the staff, and other appropriate leaders of the church at that time.

I ask you all for your patience, understanding, and prayers at this most difficult time in the life of the church.

The Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning
Presiding Bishop and Primate
February 15, 1995

95039

New Howatch book faces tension between truth and reality

reviewed by Karen Brown

Absolute Truths
Susan Howatch
Knopf (528 pages, \$25)

(ENS) "What is truth?" Pilate is said to have asked Jesus of Nazareth. Some 2,000 years later, in the century of Einstein, Freud and Jung, he might have asked instead, "What is reality?"

Advances in quantum physics make material reality seem like a great hall of mirrors. We often feel no closer to understanding another great mystery--ourselves. And it is, after all, through the variable lens of human personality that we encounter not only each other, but God. In acknowledging this condition, we see that we are capable of great self-deception as our passions, prejudices and attachments lead us now this way and now that. How then are we to recognize our true selves? How are we to know the voice of God? Are there really no absolute truths left to guide us?

This is the formidable theme undertaken with wit and grace by novelist Susan Howatch in her series of six novels about the Church of England in the 20th century. *Absolute Truths* is the closing volume in this engaging and highly entertaining exploration of the forces that lead us to construct the false selves that we present to the world, to each other, and ultimately to God. In this final installment, Charles Ashworth, retired bishop of the fictional Anglican diocese of Starbridge, ponders the obituary of a longtime ecclesiastical rival and reflects upon the journey of transformation (begun in *Glittering Images*, the first book of the series) that has characterized his own long life in the church.

Absolute Truths chronicles the personal and professional catastrophes that overwhelm Ashworth in the mid-1960s, plunging him into a shattering and finally deeper rediscovery of the absolute truth underlying all absolute truths. In 1965, as a powerful and influential defender of the great Anglican *via media*, Bishop Ashworth was certain of God's requirements. With the very best of intentions, he believed it was his duty to shore up the boundaries dividing correct from erroneous doctrine and moral from immoral behavior, especially during the chaotic and turbulent sixties. But until the crises of 1965, Ashworth never imagined that he had also been thoughtlessly erecting the very boundaries which would serve to fence out his own true self and the true selves of those he loved as surely as he had already fenced out those whom he believed were his moral inferiors.

As Ashworth struggles to put his life and faith back together, he finds that his journey

is once again inextricably and mysteriously intertwined with the two men he would never consciously have chosen as teachers and companions on the way. Jonathan Darrow (whose story is told in *Glamorous Powers* and again in *Mystical Paths*) is an Anglo-Catholic mystic, ex-Fordite monk and Ashworth's spiritual director. Neville Aysgarth (whose story is followed in *Ultimate Prizes* and *Scandalous Risks*) is a modernist liberal Protestant, dean of Starbridge Cathedral, and notorious taker of scandalous risks with his personal and professional reputation.

As the life journeys of these very different men of the church unfold before us, one recognizes that Howatch has wielded her impressive and spellbinding powers as a storyteller to depict that great challenge of finding unity within diversity that has so preoccupied Anglicans throughout the 20th century. But while reflecting larger societal and spiritual themes in this way, Howatch's characters are also magnificently individual, full of life, and compellingly real in their unique profiles of triumph and failure, fate and fortune, sin and redemption.

While each book in the series may be read independently of the others, there is great satisfaction in following the stories in sequence precisely in order to savor the development and intermingling of these colorful and turbulent lives. As Howatch weaves them all together again in this imaginative and moving conclusion, she could well have been thinking of those haunting lines from T. S. Eliot's *East Coker*:

*Home is where one starts from.
As we grow older
The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
Of dead and living.
Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered.*

--Karen Brown has a longtime interest in psychology and religion. She is a member of St. Aidan's, Boulder, Colorado, and wrote this review for the diocesan newspaper.

Photos Available in this issue of ENS are:

1. Donald Burchell elected treasurer by Executive Council (95031)
2. Burchell elected treasurer by Executive Council (95031)
3. Albuquerque doctors provide medical supplies in war-torn Bosnia (95035)
4. Episcopal Migration Ministries continues advocacy (95036)

Tentative mailing dates for future ENS releases are March 16 and April 6.

